

bird hopped back through the railings on the approach of another pedestrian. Incidentally, it appeared to both of us to be in rather poor condition.

MEERUT,

R. S. P. BATES, MAJOR.

January 8, 1937.

XIV.—SOME RARE BIRDS IN NORTHERN BURMA.

The following birds were obtained in 1935-6 in the Myitkyina district and the skins identified by Dr. C. B. Ticehurst, whose notes on them are given in square brackets.

Pomatorhinus ochraceiceps. Austen's Scimitar Babbler.

According to the *Fauna*, no race of this Scimitar Babbler is known between Karenni in Eastern Burma and Eastern Manipur. My skinner Lazum Naw, shot a male on March 8th, 1936, on the hillside below Laukkaung military police post, at about 4,000 ft. The iris was straw yellow with an outer ring of pink and the bill salmon-colour. [This bird matches the only two *austeni* in the British Museum, both of which (one is the type), came from Aimok, Manipur. There are seven specimens of *stenorhynchus* from Tengi Pani, Naga Hills, and Tippook. *Austeni* seems distinct in being greyer and paler above, and in having the flanks greyish-buff instead of warm-buff, but better series of both, and more knowledge of their distribution, are required.]

Sphenocichla roberti. Robert's Wedge-billed Wren.

My skinner, above mentioned, shot one on the same hillside out of a party of three on March 8th. He showed me the place a little later, a bamboo clump at about 4,300 ft. on the edge of a small dry ravine. The birds were in a comparatively open patch, whence firewood had been cut, and disappeared into the depths of an extremely precipitous and heavily forested evergreen hillside, which I later attempted to search twice without success. The hillside, in fact, is as difficult and impenetrable as anywhere I know in the Kachin Hills. I made notes of the soft parts at the time: iris very dark red, bill, upper mandible brownish-horny, tip gray, lower gray, blue-gray nearer nape, legs and feet dark chocolate-brown, claws horny brown. There are no previous Burma records, but it has occurred in North Cachar and Manipur. [There are only four specimens of this species in the British Museum from Konchung Peak, Manipur and Hemeo Peak, Naga Hills. Little is known about it.]

Turdus merula albocinctus. White-collared Blackbird.

I shot a female on February 11th, 1936, about 5 miles from N'Ding in the Hukawng Valley. I had previously, with glasses, had a view of what I was sure was a male near the same place. In this part of the Hukawng Valley, the new cart road runs for miles

through magnificent evergreen forest with an undergrowth of ferns. The most noticeable features of the bird life were the numerous thrushes, *Oreocincla dauma* and *mollissima* and *Turdus dissimilis* all being obtained as they came out on to the road. This is the only record of this species in Burma. [I see no reason to suppose that this is a race of *merula* as described in the *Fauna*.]

Prunella immaculata. Maroon-backed Accentor.

Lord Cranbrook got specimens in the Adung Wang in 1931, and I had one sent me from the Laukkaung neighbourhood in March 1934. In March 1936 I found it common in pairs and small parties between miles 62 and 64 on the Seniku-Hpimaw road, where the mule track has been cut out of the solid rock, and paved with moss-grown rock. The accentors were either hopping up on the rock face or feeding among fallen leaves and brushwood on the edge of the khud. They were not at all shy and might have been mistaken for tree pipits as they flitted up into the bushes. At close quarters the gray head, maroon back and dark red under-parts are most distinctive. This must be a very local bird, as I saw 15 to 20 in about a mile of this particular section.

Delichon nipalensis. Nepal House Martin.

Mr. A. K. Thomson, Burma Frontier Service, sent me a skin of one shot by him on January 2nd, at Sumprabum (4,000 ft.), about 120 miles north of Myitkyina. He wrote 'A large number of them made their appearance—they disappeared in the evening. Snow has been visible on the Kumon range for the last three days and I fancy the extreme cold has driven the birds down here'. There is only one previous record of one obtained by Major Mears in the Upper Chindwin (date and locality not mentioned). [Besides Mears' record J. C. Hopwood has stated that this species breeds in the cliffs of Kyaukpandoung, Arakan, in April and May and that it is rare elsewhere. There seem to be no Arakan specimens, however, to bear out this record, nor is it mentioned in the *Fauna*.]

Delichon cashmeriensis. Kashmir House Martin.

I obtained one in February 1934 at Myitkyina (*Ibis*, April 1935). On January 15th, 1936 I saw a flock on the China border near Sima (4,500 ft.) and shot one out of a flock on January 19th just north of Myitkyina. A very large flock of swallows and sand-martins seen on a sand-band on January 28th also undoubtedly contained some of these birds.

This bird on the wing looks much more like a sand-martin with a white rump than *urbica* or *nipalensis*, both of which are steely-blue in appearance on the upper parts. [I have given reasons (*J.B.N.H.S.*, xxxii, 348) for believing that *cashmeriensis* is not a race of *urbica*; it seems, however, that it may well be a race of *daoypus*.]

Circus cyaneus. Hen Harrier.

There appear to be no published records of the Hen Harrier in Burma. I have more than once seen very white Harriers in Burma

which I assumed to be *macrourus* but never managed to obtain one until January 26th 1936, when I shot a male Hen Harrier hunting in willow scrub on the Irrawaddy just below Myitkyina. Mr. T. R. Livesey says that he has seen it on the Inle Lake and there are numerous records from Yunnan. From an examination of specimens in the British Museum it is clear that the Pale and Hen Harriers would be difficult to distinguish when on the wing. Since Oates's day (1889) the published notes on all harriers are very meagre and I can find no later records of the Pale Harrier, so that it is to be hoped that some Burma naturalist will turn his attention to them.

Rallus aquaticus indicus. Indian Water Rail.

A specimen of this bird was obtained by Mr. J. A. Edwards of the Indian Police of March 9th 1935, a few miles north of Myitkyina. I had previously flushed a number out of a marshy corner of a jheel at Chaungwa in the Indaw Valley while duck-shooting in late January 1935, but the skin of the only one shot by me went bad and had to be destroyed. This bird is described in the *Fauna* as 'migratory in winter to Burma' but the only published records of any one having met with it are below. [Blyth recorded this bird from Arakan and Captain Shopland informed Oates that he had obtained it there, doubtless near Akyab where he was stationed. It is listed by Rippon as occurring on the Inle Lake, S. Shan States.]

Charadrius placidus. Long-billed Ringed Plover.

The only previous Burma record is of one shot by me on March 27th 1933 in the N'Mai Valley. I got one out of three on February 1st 1936, near Tasang on the Irrawaddy and thought I saw another near Myitkyina about a fortnight later. But it seems a rare bird, easy to overlook on the big shingle banks of the Upper Irrawaddy.

Nyroca marila marila. Scaup.

I shot a female scaup on a jheel near Katcho on November 10th 1935. It was with an immature tufted duck and one other (unidentified) duck and the whitish patch all round the face in front of the eye was most noticeable. There are no previous Burma records, but four from Chittagong and Assam.

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J. K. STANFORD, I.C.S.

XV.—CURIOUS NESTING SITES OF 'THE LARGE
PIED WAGTAIL [*MOTACILLA LUGUBRIS*
MADERASPATENSIS (GMEL.)]

In *The Birds of Southern India* by Baker and Inglis, mention is made of the fact that these birds nest in all sorts of places—in holes, wells, bridges and buildings, in crevices of rocks etc.

In 1934 several nests were found and in four instances the nests were built on the bottom flanges of small girder bridges on the